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Carrying Out a Theory

Willard Spenser



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Successful Rural Plays

A Strong List From Which to Select Your
Next Play

FARM FOLKS. A Rural Play in Four Acts, by ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS. For five male and six female characters. Time of playing, two hours and a half. One simple exterior, two easy interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Flora Goodwin, a farmer's daughter, is engaged to Philip Burleigh, a young New Yorker. Philip's mother wants him to marry a society woman, and by falsehoods makes Flora believe Philip does not love her. Dave Weston, who wants Flora himself, helps the deception by intercepting a letter from Philip to Flora. She agrees to marry Dave, but on the eve of their marriage Dave confesses, Philip learns the truth, and he and Flora are reunited. It is a simple plot, but full of speeches and situations that sway an audience alternately to tears and to laughter.

HOME TIES. A Rural Play in Four Acts, by ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS. Characters, four male, five female. Plays two hours and a half. Scene, a simple interior—same for all four acts. Costumes, modern. One of the strongest plays Mr. Tubbs has written. Martin Winn's wife left him when his daughter Ruth was a baby. Harold Vincent, the nephew and adopted son of the man who has wronged Martin, makes love to Ruth Winn. She is also loved by Len Everett, a prosperous young farmer. When Martin discovers who Harold is, he orders him to leave Ruth. Harold, who does not love sincerely, yields. Ruth discovers she loves Len, but thinks she has lost him also. Then he comes back, and Ruth finds her happiness.

THE OLD NEW HAMPSHIRE HOME. A New England Drama in Three Acts, by FRANK DUMONT. For seven males and four females. Time, two hours and a half. Costumes, modern. A play with a strong heart interest and pathos, yet rich in humor. Easy to act and very effective. A rural drama of the "Old Homestead" and "Way Down East" type. Two exterior scenes, one interior, all easy to set. Full of strong situations and delightfully humorous passages. The kind of a play everybody understands and likes.

THE OLD DAIRY HOMESTEAD. A Rural Comedy in Three Acts, by FRANK DUMONT. For five males and four females. Time, two hours. Rural costumes. Scenes rural exterior and interior. An adventurer obtains a large sum of money from a farm house through the intimidation of the farmer's niece, whose husband he claims to be. Her escapes from the wiles of the villain and his female accomplice are both starting and novel.

A WHITE MOUNTAIN BOY. A Strong Melodrama in Five Acts, by CHARLES TOWNSEND. For seven males and four females, and three supers. Time, two hours and twenty minutes. One exterior, three interiors. Costumes easy. The hero, a country lad, twice saves the life of a banker's daughter, which results in their betrothal. A scoundrelly clerk has the banker in his power, but the White Mountain boy finds a way to checkmate his schemes, saves the banker, and wins the girl.

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

Carrying Out a Theory

A Comedy in One Act

By

WILLARD SPENSER



PHILADELPHIA

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1921

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Carrying Out a Theory

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Carrying Out a Theory

CHARACTERS

JACK BLUNT, *A traveling salesman; full of new ideas*
WILL RUST, *A traveling salesman; with old theories*
PETER WELCOME, *Proprietor of the "Red Lion Inn"*
ANN, *An up-to-date waitress*
GEORGE WASHINGTON NAPOLEON BONAPARTE SMITH,
A round, jocund, jolly colored
chef. Proud of his fame as a cook

COSTUMES

BLUNT and RUST.—Every-day business suits.

PETER WELCOME.—Modern every-day suit.

ANN.—Jaunty waitress suit—white apron and white cap.

CHEF.—Black trousers, long white apron, white coat, white chef cap.

PROPERTIES

Two plates; two knives; two forks; large carving knife; waiter; plate with prop, steak on it; covered dish on table; bill of fare.

TIME.—Present.

Carrying Out a Theory

SCENE.—*Side dining-room of the "Red Lion Inn."*
Two tables, both spread with white table-cloths; two chairs at each table, in centre of stage against back drop.

(*Enter BLUNT and RUST, L. U. E., each with a grip and newspaper in his hands.*)

BLUNT (*seating himself at R. side of table*). You know they serve great "eats" here! The colored chef is a wonder.

RUST (*taking seat opposite BLUNT*). So I've heard.

(*Enter ANN from R. U. E. with a smile for BLUNT and RUST; hands bill of fare to BLUNT; arranges table.*)

BLUNT (*looking at bill of fare, then to RUST*). How would you like a nice thick piece of rare porter-house steak, with French fried potatoes, and later a big piece of pumpkin pie with coffee?—suit you?

RUST. To a "T."

BLUNT (*to ANN*). Did you grasp the order?

ANN. Did you wish tea?

BLUNT. No, fair antediluvian damsel, we are *tee-totalers*.

(*ANN flouts out of the room in a huff.*)

RUST. You evidently didn't mean it, but you put that girl in a grouch all right.

BLUNT. I *did* mean it, to carry out my theory—that

almost all households are upset by plain every-day grouch.

RUST. But some establishments are so well regulated that your theory wouldn't work.

BLUNT (*getting excited*). I'll bet you twenty dollars that inside of twenty minutes I will upset this whole establishment, and they'll want to throw us into the street.

RUST. You might do it if you'd smash all the china.

BLUNT. No, I'll only comment on the cooking.

RUST. Now don't lose your good money—you just told me this place is famous for its cooking, and the chef is a wonder.

BLUNT. Yes, but I'm betting on a sure *theory*.

RUST. Your *theory* is all wrong, and I wouldn't take any such easy lamb money.

BLUNT (*taking a wallet from his pocket and laying two ten-dollar bills on the table*). Cover it if you think it such easy money.

RUST (*taking a roll of bills from his left hip pocket, selecting two tens*). Who will hold it?

BLUNT (*raising a dish*). Put it under this, and the winner to take all. (*While they are doing this, ANN enters with their order, places it before BLUNT, who looks at the steak. In a rasping discordant voice to ANN.*) Take this back to the cook.

ANN. What for?

BLUNT. Tell him it's rotten!

ANN (*in a shrill, excited voice*). Rotten!

BLUNT. Yes, rotten!

ANN (*looking the steak over*). I don't see anything the matter with it.

BLUNT. Grab it quick or it will crawl off! (*ANN grabs plate with steak and flouts out of the room mad as a hornet.*) Score one for my grouch theory.

RUST (*putting hand on plate that has the money under it, smiling*). The easy lamb money is still here.

BLUNT. Wait! I haven't played all my cards.

(*Enter ANN from R. U. E. who stands and points out BLUNT to CHEF, then exits. CHEF goes up to BLUNT*

with plate and steak in his left hand, a big carving knife in his right.)

CHEF. Scuse me, sah! Am you de gent dat said dis steak was no good? (*Points knife at BLUNT, who falls back with comedy shiver.*) Am you de gent dat said dis steak was not fit to eat? (*Points knife at BLUNT; some business, only louder voice.*) Am you de gent dat said dis—dis steak was rotten!

(Stronger pointing of knife, with big shiver on BLUNT'S part.)

BLUNT (*looking at steak*). That's what I said, and I will add it's only fit to throw to the pigs!

CHEF (*rolling the whites of his eyes up to the ceiling*). Oh, my stars! Hold me tight to dis yer spot! George Washington Napoleon Bonaparte Smith told he has served rotten meat to a guest, ough! (*Holds point of knife up in the air with forward jerk. BLUNT jumps back every time CHEF does this. Comedy picture on each "ough" of the CHEF with the knife. Enter ANN, R. U. E.; stands a minute, sees trouble—screams and exits. CHEF putting plate of meat on the table, controlling his temper.*) What makes you think dis yer steak is not good?

BLUNT. Smell it!

CHEF (*smelling steak*). Permit me to say, sah, dat's de sweetest piece of meat dat was ever sarved in dis yer house.

BLUNT. Your smelling apparatus is out of order.

CHEF. You means to insinuate, sah, dat I don't know good meat when I smells it, sah?

BLUNT. Exactly.

CHEF (*looking up to the ceiling*). Oh, my stars, hold me tight to dis yer spot *once more!* (*CHEF looking at RUST.*) Now the quicker you two gents "Fly de coop" and get out of dis yer establishment, de bettah!

PROPRIETOR (*enters from R. U. E. hastily, followed by ANN*). What's the trouble, Chef?

CHEF. Dis guest yere (*motioning to BLUNT*) says dat steak I sarved is rotten! (*Motions to steak.*)

PROP. Is it?

CHEF. No, sah! It's de sweetest piece of meat I ever sarved, sah!

PROP. (*smelling steak*). There is nothing the matter with that steak.

BLUNT. You'd better see a specialist; your nose is out of order.

PROP. My nose out of order?

BLUNT. Yes.

PROP. You mean to say that *that* meat is not good?

(*Pointing to it.*)

BLUNT. Exactly.

PROP. (*raising his voice*). Well, I'm going to put *your nose* out of order right now!

CHEF (*motions to BLUNT*). Let me attend to dis gent! (*Lays down knife; rolling up his shirt-sleeves.*) You take de other gent. But look out for them, Boss. *I'm sure they'se crazy—stark crazy!*

BLUNT (*grasping the chance to get out of their plight*). Crazy! Lunatic asylum! Matawan! Matawan! Wah! Wah! Wah! We're crazy all right. (*Aside to RUST.*) Act the part, it's the only way out.

RUST (*aside*). I've got you. (*Grabs the table-cloth off other table, wraps it around his body, dances around like a war dance.*) Matawan! Matawan! Wah! Wah! Wah!

BLUNT (*dancing after RUST, catches carving knife from table*). Matawan! Matawan! Wah! Wah! Wah! (*ANN stands at side too frightened to move. PROPRIETOR starts to sneak off R. U. E. BLUNT heads him off.*) Shall I take his heart, or his liver?

(*Same business with knife that CHEF did to scare BLUNT and RUST. CHEF tries to sneak off L. U. E. RUST heads him off.*)

RUST (*in a deep, shivering, sepulchral voice; point-*

ing at the CHEF). I'm the ghost of Hamlet! You! George Washington Napoleon Bonaparte Smith! Your time has come! (*Makes mesmeric passes at him.*) Minion! Down on your knees!

(*CHEF falls on his knees, clasping hands together, looking up to ceiling shivering.*)

CHEF. Oh, Mr. Hamlet! Oh, Mr. Ghost! Dear Mr. Ghost! Don't put a Hoo-doo on me; Mr. Ghost, *spare me!*

RUST. Don't move!

CHEF. I'se froze to de spot, Mr. Ghost.

(*ANN has been too frightened before to move; now starts to sneak off R. U. E.*)

PROP. (*to ANN*). Quick! 'Phone to the lunatic asylum!

(*RUST heads her off. Makes mesmeric passes towards her.*)

RUST. Don't move! (*In a high, nasal voice.*) This world is round wise men declare, and hangs on nothing in the air. (*Deep voice.*) Don't move! (*Making passes at her.*) Ha! now I've got you under my spell. Pose like Mercury. (*ANN makes comedy attempt at a pose; at last stands on her right foot, leans forward, left foot out behind, right arm and hand pointing up in the air.*) Hold it for your life!

(*ANN keeps the pose. PROPRIETOR again tries to sneak off. BLUNT threatens him with the carving knife.*)

BLUNT. You, the proprietor of this Red Lion Inn, cannot escape me; bow to the guests I see coming in. (*Motions to L. U. E. door.*) Bow to them, bow! (*Flourishes the carving knife.*) Matawan! Matawan! Wah! Wah! Wah!

(PROPRIETOR bows low as though welcoming guests, putting one hand over his back, extending other to guests. Keep this up until laugh is over.)

RUST (coming in front of PROP., makes passes at him). Now you are the *Lion*, of the *Red Lion Inn*. Down on all fours. Come over here! (PROP. faces footlights on all fours.) Sing for us! (PROP. lets out a roar, puts his hand to the side of his head, like a lion washing his face. Roars again.) That will do! Get in your cage. (Motions behind chair. PROP. goes on all fours.) Don't move! (CHEF starts to sneak off. RUST sees him.) Hold, villain! (Makes some wild mesmeric passes at him.) Stand on your head!

CHEF. Oh, my stars, Mr. Ghost, have a heart!

BLUNT (makes a move toward him with his knife). I'll have his heart.

RUST. Up!

CHEF. I'se gettin' up, Mr. Ghost, dear Mr. Ghost, I'se gettin' up!

(Tries to stand on his head, falls over, tries again; keeps it up as long as the audience laugh. At last balances on his head with legs spread apart like a pair of scissors.)

RUST. Come down! (CHEF sits on stage.) Now I'm going to un-mesmerize you.

(Makes wild passes over him.)

CHEF. Thank de Lord, Mr. Hamlet. (Shakes himself.) Now I feel like a morning-glory.

BLUNT (laying knife on table. To PROPRIETOR). I apologize to you, sir! We are not lunatics. (Hands his card. ANN, interested, drops out of Mercury pose and listens.) I represent the firm of "Brown, Johnson & Co. of New York," and my friend here represents "Wainwright, Hodges & Co., of Boston."

CHEF. And you two gents didn't escape from Matawan?

BLUNT. Never saw the place.

CHEF (*to RUST*). And *you'se* no relation to Mr. Hamlet?

RUST (*laughing*). Nor his ghost.

BLUNT (*to PROP.*). This was a bet to carry out a *theory* that inside of twenty minutes I could so upset the serenity of this house you would want to throw us in the street.

CHEF. We shu did.

PROP. (*laughing*). Well, "all's well that ends well."—Shake!

(PROPRIETOR and BLUNT shake hands.)

BLUNT (*turning to CHEF*). And you, George Washington Napoleon Bonaparte Smith, one of the best cooks in the country, shake!

CHEF (*holding back his hand*). Am you pufictly sure der is nuffen de matter with dis yur steak?

(*Pointing to it.*)

BLUNT (*laughing*). It's the best piece of steak I ever saw.

CHEF. Den, George Washington Napoleon Bonaparte Smith will shake hands with you. (*They shake.*)

BLUNT (*to RUST*). You'll own my *theory* is right; —a man with a grouch can upset the best regulated establishment in the world.

RUST. You've won the bet all right.

(*Takes bills from under plate. Hands them to BLUNT.*)

BLUNT (*turning to ANN*). Lady! Get the biggest red feather you can find to put in your black velvet hat. (*Hands her one of the ten dollar bills.*)

ANN (*looking at bill*). Ten! (*Aside.*) I'll bet it's stage money. (*With a curtsy to BLUNT. Aloud.*) "Thank you sir she said."

BLUNT (*handing bill to CHEF*). Could you warm that steak for us?

CHEF (*looking at bill*). Ten! My stars, it's raining money. Wait just one little minute, gentlemen, and I'll have dat steak sizzlin' hot.

(CHEF *picks up the dish with steak, faces audience.*)

Positions for Curtain.

CHEF.

PROPRIETOR, ANN. *Table.* BLUNT, RUST.

R.

L.

Centre.

Footlights.

Unusually Good Entertainments

Read One or More of These Before Deciding on
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GRADUATION DAY AT WOOD HILL SCHOOL.

An Entertainment in Two Acts, by WARD MACAULEY. For six males and four females, with several minor parts. Time of playing, two hours. Modern costumes. Simple interior scenes; may be presented in a hall without scenery. The unusual combination of a real "entertainment," including music, recitations, etc., with an interesting love story. The graduation exercises include short speeches, recitations, songs, funny interruptions, and a comical speech by a country school trustee.

EXAMINATION DAY AT WOOD HILL SCHOOL.

An Entertainment in One Act, by WARD MACAULEY. Eight male and six female characters, with minor parts. Plays one hour. Scene, an easy interior, or may be given without scenery. Costumes, modern. Miss Marks, the teacher, refuses to marry a trustee, who threatens to discharge her. The examination includes recitations and songs, and brings out many funny answers to questions. At the close Robert Coleman, an old lover, claims the teacher. Very easy and very effective.

BACK TO THE COUNTRY STORE. A Rural Entertainment in Three Acts, by WARD MACAULEY. For four male and five female characters, with some supers. Time, two hours. Two scenes, both easy interiors. Can be played effectively without scenery. Costumes, modern. All the principal parts are sure hits. Quigley Higginbotham, known as "Quig," a clerk in a country store, aspires to be a great author or singer and decides to try his fortunes in New York. The last scene is in Quig's home. He returns a failure but is offered a partnership in the country store. He pops the question in the midst of a surprise party given in his honor. Easy to do and very funny.

THE DISTRICT CONVENTION. A Farcical Sketch in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For eleven males and one female, or twelve males. Any number of other parts or supernumeraries may be added. Plays forty-five minutes. No special scenery is required, and the costumes and properties are all easy. The play shows an uproarious political nominating convention. The climax comes when a woman's rights champion, captures the convention. There is a great chance to burlesque modern politics and to work in local gags. Every part will make a hit.

SI SLOCUM'S COUNTRY STORE. An Entertainment in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. Eleven male and five female characters with supernumeraries. Several parts may be doubled. Plays one hour. Interior scene, or may be played without set scenery. Costumes, modern. The rehearsal for an entertainment in the village church gives plenty of opportunity for specialty work. A very jolly entertainment of the sort adapted to almost any place or occasion.

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Unusually Good Entertainments

Read One or More of These Before Deciding on
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A SURPRISE PARTY AT BRINKLEY'S. An Entertainment in One Scene, by WARD MACAULEY. Seven male and seven female characters. Interior scene, or may be given without scenery. Costumes, modern. Time, one hour. By the author of the popular successes, "Graduation Day at Wood Hill School," "Back to the Country Store," etc. The villagers have planned a birthday surprise party for Mary Brinkley, recently graduated from college. They all join in jolly games, songs, conundrums, etc., and Mary becomes engaged, which surprises the surprisers. The entertainment is a sure success.

JONES VS. JINKS. A Mock Trial in One Act, by EDWARD MUMFORD. Fifteen male and six female characters, with supernumeraries if desired. May be played all male. Many of the parts (members of the jury, etc.) are small. Scene, a simple interior; may be played without scenery. Costumes, modern. Time of playing, one hour. This mock trial has many novel features, unusual characters and quick action. Nearly every character has a funny entrance and laughable lines. There are many rich parts, and fast fun throughout.

THE SIGHT-SEEING CAR. A Comedy Sketch in One Act, by ERNEST M. GOULD. For seven males, two females, or may be all male. Parts may be doubled, with quick changes, so that four persons may play the sketch. Time, forty-five minutes. Simple street scene. Costumes, modern. The superintendent of a sight-seeing automobile engages two men to run the machine. A Jew, a farmer, a fat lady and other humorous characters give them all kinds of trouble. This is a regular gatling-gun stream of rollicking repartee.

THE CASE OF SMYTHE VS. SMITH. An Original Mock Trial in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. Eighteen males and two females, or may be all male. Plays about one hour. Scene, a county courtroom; requires no scenery; may be played in an ordinary hall. Costumes, modern. This entertainment is nearly perfect of its kind, and a sure success. It can be easily produced in any place or on any occasion, and provides almost any number of good parts.

THE OLD MAIDS' ASSOCIATION. A Farcical Entertainment in One Act, by LOUISE LATHAM WILSON. For thirteen females and one male. The male part may be played by a female, and the number of characters increased to twenty or more. Time, forty minutes. The play requires neither scenery nor properties, and very little in the way of costumes. Can easily be prepared in one or two rehearsals.

BARGAIN DAY AT BLOOMSTEIN'S. A Farcical Entertainment in One Act, by EDWARD MUMFORD. For five males and ten females, with supers. Interior scene. Costumes, modern. Time, thirty minutes. The characters and the situations which arise from their endeavors to buy and sell make rapid-fire fun from start to finish.

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Successful Plays for All Girls

In Selecting Your Next Play Do Not Overlook This List

YOUNG DOCTOR DEVINE. A Farce in Two Acts, by MRS. E. J. H. GOODFELLOW. One of the most popular plays for girls. For nine female characters. Time in playing, thirty minutes. Scenery, ordinary interior. Modern costumes. Girls in a boarding-school, learning that a young doctor is coming to vaccinate all the pupils, eagerly consult each other as to the manner of fascinating the physician. When the doctor appears upon the scene the pupils discover that the physician is a female practitioner.

SISTER MASONS. A Burlesque in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For eleven females. Time, thirty minutes. Costumes, fantastic gowns, or dominoes. Scene, interior. A grand expose of Masonry. Some women profess to learn the secrets of a Masonic lodge by hearing their husbands talk in their sleep, and they institute a similar organization.

A COMMANDING POSITION. A Farcical Entertainment, by AMELIA SANFORD. For seven female characters and ten or more other ladies and children. Time, one hour. Costumes, modern. Scenes, easy interiors and one street scene. Marian Young gets tired living with her aunt, Miss Skinflint. She decides to "attain a commanding position." Marian tries hospital nursing, college settlement work and school teaching, but decides to go back to housework.

HOW A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET. A Comedy in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For ten female characters. Time, half an hour. Scene, an easy interior. Costumes, modern. Mabel Sweetly has just become engaged to Harold, but it's "the deepest kind of a secret." Before announcing it they must win the approval of Harold's uncle, now in Europe, or lose a possible ten thousand a year. At a tea Mabel meets her dearest friend. Maude sees Mabel has a secret, she coaxes and Mabel tells her. But Maude lets out the secret in a few minutes to another friend and so the secret travels.

THE OXFORD AFFAIR. A Comedy in Three Acts, by JOSEPHINE H. COBB and JENNIE E. PAINE. For eight female characters. Plays one hour and three-quarters. Scenes, interiors at a seaside hotel. Costumes, modern. The action of the play is located at a summer resort. Alice Graham, in order to chaperon herself, poses as a widow, and Miss Oxford first claims her as a sister-in-law, then denounces her. The onerous duties of Miss Oxford, who attempts to serve as chaperon to Miss Howe and Miss Ashton in the face of many obstacles, furnish an evening of rare enjoyment.

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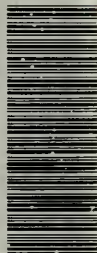
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